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HONOUR *the* BRAVE



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HONOUR THE BRAVE

WITH A DEEP SWELLING ROAR, NINE BOSTON FIGHTER-BOMBERS TOOK OFF FROM THEIR DESERT AIRFIELD NEAR THE BORDERS OF TRIPOLITANIA. THEY WERE A CLOSE-SUPPORT SQUADRON OF THE TACTICAL AIR FORCE, THEIR JOB TO BACK UP THE ARMY IN AN ATTACK THAT WAS JUST STARTING. BUT ONE HAZARD STOOD IN THE BOMBERS' PATH - THEY WERE TAKING OFF INTO AN APPROACHING SANDSTORM.

THE MET. TYPES SAY
WE CAN GET ABOVE
IT IN TIME... BUT
WE'LL HAVE TO CLIMB
FAST TO DO IT!



Chapter 1. Stormy Passage

PILOTING ONE OF THE BOSTONS WAS FLIGHT LIEUTENANT BARRY PLUMMET, COOL AND UNFLURRIED IN MOMENTS OF DANGER, BARRY FLEW HIS PLANES BY INSTINCT AND HIS SENSE OF TOUCH AS MUCH AS BY THE INSTRUMENTS ON THE PANEL BEFORE HIM. HE WAS A FIRST CLASS PILOT.

WE'RE GOING
RIGHT INTO IT!
CAN'T YOU CLIMB
ANY FASTER,
SKIPPER?

WE'RE AT MAXIMUM
REVS NOW! BUT WE
MUST GET THROUGH—
WE'VE GOT TO KEEP
OUR DATE WITH THE
EIGHTH ARMY!

FORTY MILES AWAY, THE INFANTRY WERE STARTING THEIR ADVANCE TOWARDS A STRONGLY HELD GERMAN POSITION. ONE OF THE COMPANY COMMANDERS WAS MAJOR PETER WARNFORD, A DESERT VETERAN...

THE AIR FORCE WALLAH'S
ARE LATE! I CAN'T BEAR
INEFFICIENCY, SERGEANT-
MAJOR.

THE ATTACK HAD BEEN WORKED OUT TO A STRICT TIMETABLE... BY THE TIME THE "SOFTENING-UP" STRIKE BY THE BOSTONS WAS DUE, THE INFANTRY WERE ALREADY MOVING UP TO THEIR START LINE.

I NEVER LIKED THIS IDEA OF CO-OPERATION WITH THE AIR FORCE. IT GIVES US NO DIRECT CONTROL! GIVE ME A FIELD-REGIMENT OF GUNNERS, ANY DAY!

YES, SIR!



THE INFANTRY COMPANIES, SOON ADVANCING OVER OPEN GROUND, STILL SAW NO SIGN OF THE CLOSE-SUPPORT PLANES. BUT IN THE DESERT SKY BEHIND THEM THERE WAS AN OMINOUS YELLOW HAZE.

STILL NO SIGN OF 'EM, SIR... LOOKS LIKE A SANDSTORM'S BEHIND US.

THE ARMY HAS TO FIGHT IN ALL WEATHERS - SO SHOULD THEY!



WITH A DEAFENING CRACK, A GERMAN EIGHTY-EIGHT M.M. SHELL LANDED CLOSE TO A BRITISH TANK. IT WAS THE SIGNAL FOR THE START OF A WITHERING BURST OF FIRE FROM THE GERMANS...



STILL THE BRITISH PRESSED HOME THE ATTACK. BUT, WITHOUT THE EXPECTED AIR SUPPORT, IT WAS DOOMED TO FAILURE. PETER WARNFORD LED HIS DEPLETED COMPANY ON, DISPLAYING GREAT COURAGE.

KEEP GOING,
MEN - AT ALL
COSTS!



BUT SEVERE CASUALTIES WERE SUFFERED BEFORE THE ATTACK WAS FINALLY CALLED OFF. BITTERLY, THE INFANTRY BEGAN TO WITHDRAW UNDER ITS OWN COVERING FIRE.

KEEP FIRING WHILE THEY GET THE WOUNDED AWAY!



THE CLOSE-SUPPORT SQUADRON OF BOSTONS HAD SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES ITSELF, IN TRYING TO FLY THROUGH THE SANDSTORM. TWO PLANES HAD LOST CONTROL AND CRASHED... THREE OTHERS HAD MADE FORCED LANDINGS...



Honour The Brave

ONLY TWO OF THE PLANES GOT THROUGH, ONE OF THEM BARRY PLUMMET'S. BUT THEY HAD LOST THEIR WAY, AND ARRIVED OVER THE SCENE FIFTEEN MINUTES TOO LATE. BY THAT TIME, THE ABORTIVE ATTACK WAS OVER.

HERE THEY COME, TOO LATE TO HELP... AND ONLY TWO OF THE PERISHERS!

TYPICAL AIR FORCE SHOW, SAR'NT... YOU CAN'T RELY ON THOSE FELLOWS...



BARRY AND HIS FELLOW - PILOT MADE A TOKEN STRIKE ON THE GERMANS, SWEEPING LOW OVER THE LINES AND RIDDLING THEM WITH MACHINE - GUN FIRE. IT WAS ALL THEY COULD DO NOW...

OBVIOUSLY, THE KHAKI TYPES HAVE CALLED OFF THEIR ATTACK... BUT WE CAN HELP COVER THEIR RETREAT.



IF THEY'D USED THEIR HEADS, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE STAGED AN ATTACK IN A SANDSTORM AND EXPECTED HELP FROM US. TYPICAL ARMY SHOW, THOUGH - BONEHEADED!

Honour The Brave

7

BY THE TIME THE BRITISH UNITS HAD COMPLETED THEIR WITHDRAWAL, PETER WARNFORD WAS HIMSELF A CASUALTY. WHEN HIS COLONEL SAW HIM, PETER WAS A BITTER, UNREASONABLE MAN...

IT WAS THE BOYS IN BLUE, SIR / WE LOST A LOT OF MEN BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T TURN UP ON TIME / I SUPPOSE EVERYONE WILL THINK IT WAS MY FAULT!

IT WAS NOBODY'S FAULT, PETER. TAKE IT EASY, WE ALL KNOW YOU'VE HAD A TOUGH TIME.



PETER'S WOUNDS TOOK SOME TIME TO HEAL AND HE WAS SENT HOME, TO RETURN TO HIS REGIMENTAL DEPOT AS AN INSTRUCTOR.



BUT HIS SHOULDERING GRUDGE AGAINST THE AIR FORCE REMAINED...

Chapter 2. The Flying Soldiers

ONE DAY, SOME MONTHS LATER AT HIS DEPOT IN OXFORDSHIRE, PETER WARNFORD SAW A STRANGE SIGHT CROSSING THE SKY. . . .



PETER HAD HEARD ALL ABOUT PARATROOPERS. BUT THIS WAS THE FIRST HE HAD HEARD ABOUT THE ARMY'S SCHEME TO LAND ASSAULT TROOPS IN THE FIELD BY GLIDERS. . . .



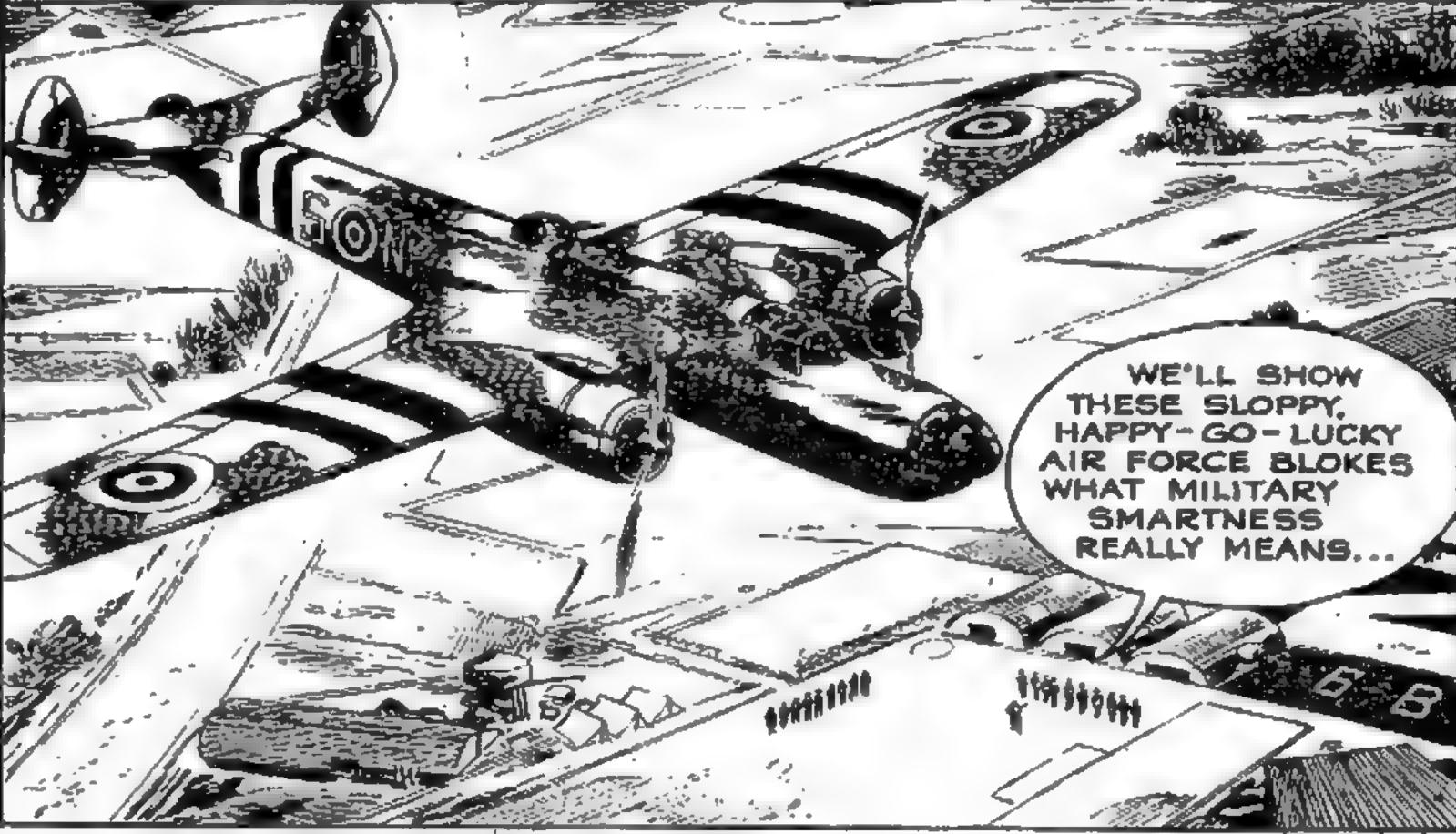
PETER WARNFORD WAS TYPICAL OF THE TOUGH, FEARLESS FIGHTING MEN WHO VOLUNTEERED TO JOIN THE GLIDER PILOT REGIMENT. HE BEGAN AN INTENSIVE TRAINING COURSE ON POWERED CRAFT AND GLIDERS.



BUT THERE WAS ALSO A GRUELING COURSE OF MILITARY TRAINING FOR THE VOLUNTEERS...



FOR THE WHOLE OF THE TRAINING COURSE, AIR FORCE AND ARMY PERSONNEL WERE WORKING TOGETHER ON THE SAME STATION. INEVITABLY, THERE WAS FRICTION BETWEEN THEM, FOR THEIR METHODS WERE VERY DIFFERENT.



THE SOLDIERS, PROUD OF THEIR TRADITIONAL MILITARY DISCIPLINE, WERE DETERMINED TO OUTSHINE THEIR OPPOSITE NUMBERS. THE MORE EASY-GOING AIRMEN LOOKED WITH DISTASTE ON ALL THE MILITARY PARADING...



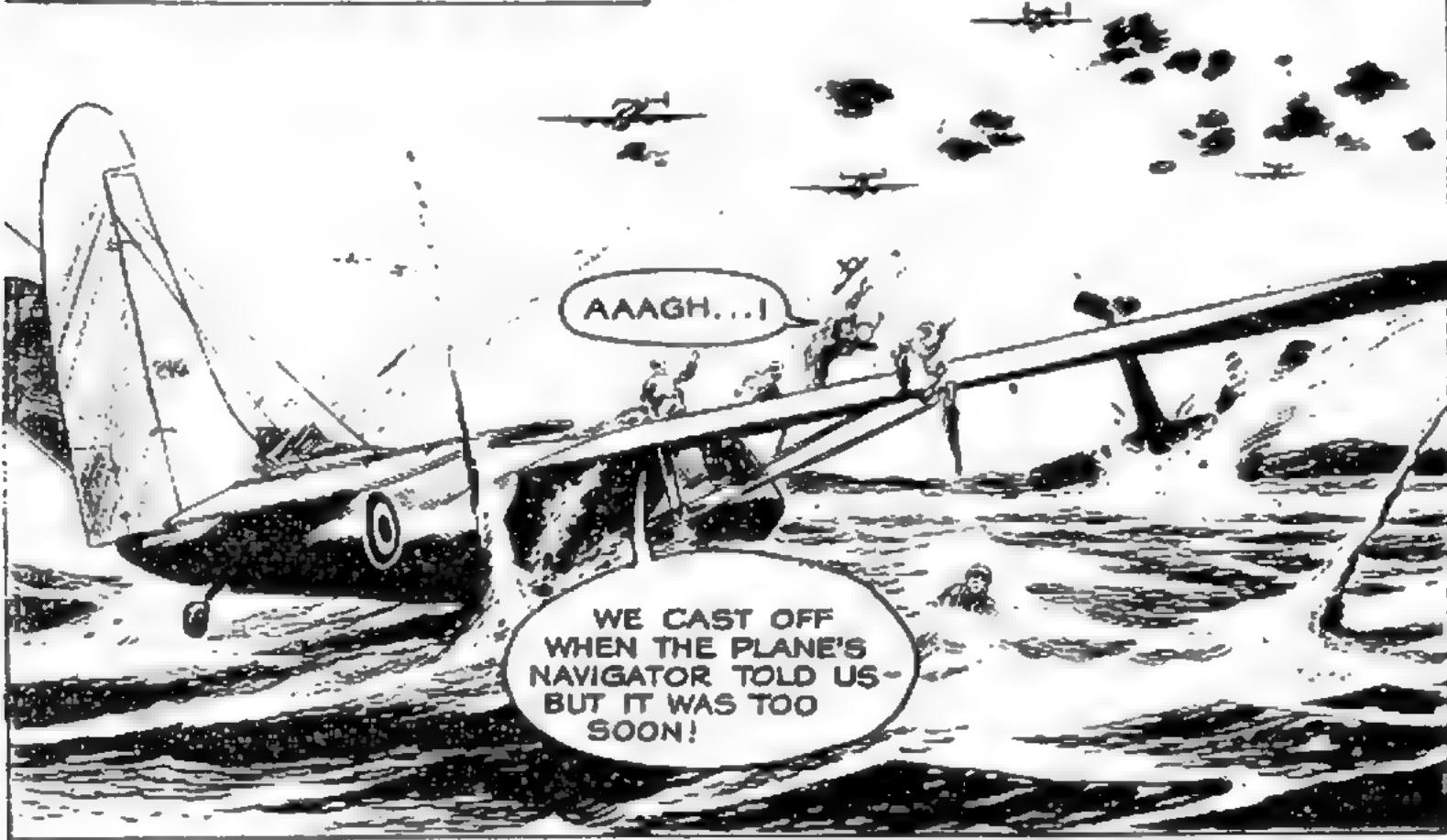
SOME MUTUAL ANTAGONISM HAD BEEN EXPECTED... THE WHOLE PROJECT WAS STILL EXPERIMENTAL. SENIOR OFFICERS ON BOTH SIDES MADE ALLOWANCES FOR THE FEW INTER-SERVICE QUARRELS...



BUT IN FACT, THE FIRST OPERATIONAL LANDINGS BY TRAINED GLIDER TROOPS, AS PART OF THE SICILY INVASION, DID NOT PROVE TO BE AN UNQUALIFIED SUCCESS.



MANY OF THE WACO GLIDERS DROPPED SHORT INTO THE SEA, TO COME UNDER DEADLY FIRE FROM THE BEACHES.



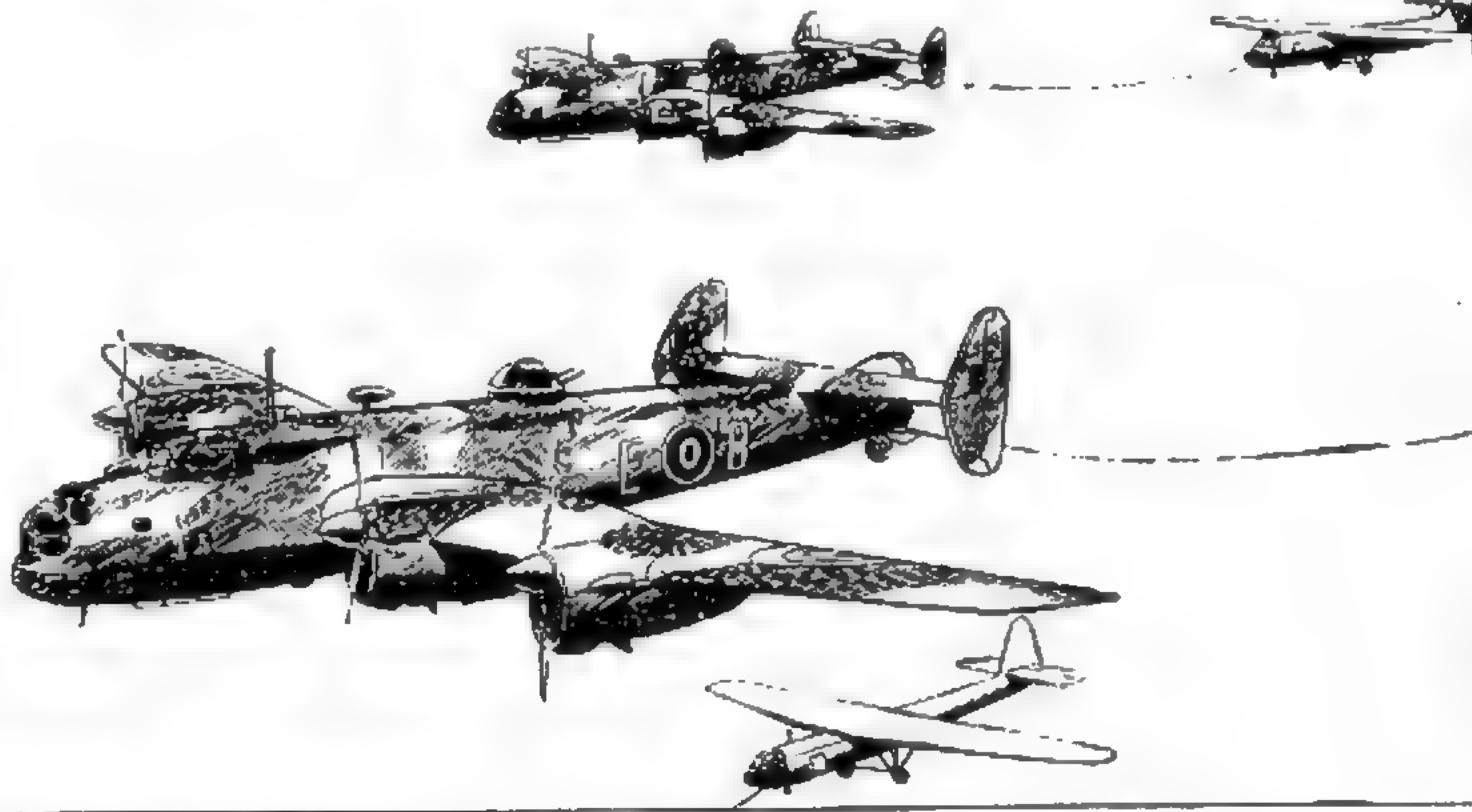
IN FACT, THE FAULT HAD BEEN DUE TO NO HUMAN ERRORS, CARELESSNESS, OR LACK OF COURAGE. NO ONE COULD HAVE FORESEEN THE EXTRAORDINARY ATMOSPHERIC CONDITIONS WHICH PREVAILED THAT DAY IN THAT PART OF THE MEDITERRANEAN...

IT WAS THE UNEXPECTED COOLING OF THE AIR OVER THE COAST OF SICILY - THAT'S WHAT MADE THE GLIDERS LOSE HEIGHT SO RAPIDLY.



Honour The Brave

THE TRAINING OF THE VOLUNTEER PILOTS, LIKE MAJOR PETER WARNFORD, CONTINUED. SOON THEY WERE TEAMED UP WITH THE R.A.F. "TUG" CREWS, WHO WERE TO TOW THEM INTO ACTION.



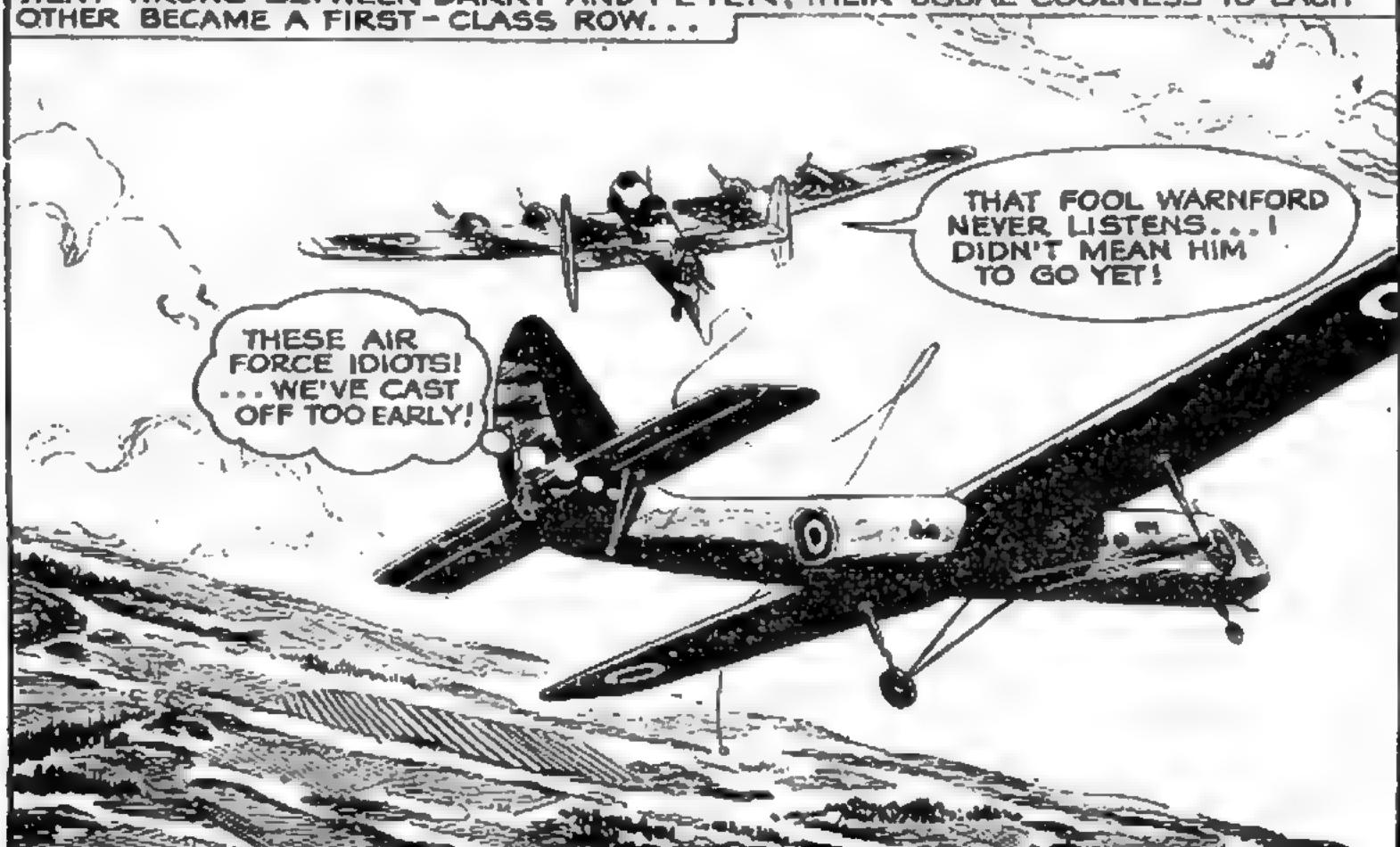
FLYING THE TUGS WAS STRANGE WORK FOR THE R.A.F. PILOTS. MANY HAD BEEN TRANSFERRED FROM BOMBER COMMAND AND ONE OF THESE WAS BARRY PLUMMET, PROMOTED TO SQUADRON LEADER.



OF ALL THE QUARRELS THAT SURVIVED BETWEEN THE MEN OF THE TWO SERVICES, THE MOST BITTER WAS BETWEEN BARRY AND PETER BY A COINCIDENCE THAT NEITHER OF THEM RELISHED THEY WERE NOW TEAMED UP TOGETHER.



ERRORS AND ACCIDENTS WERE UNAVOIDABLE IN TRAINING, BUT IF ANYTHING WENT WRONG BETWEEN BARRY AND PETER, THEIR USUAL COOLNESS TO EACH OTHER BECAME A FIRST-CLASS ROW...



ANY BAD PRACTICE LANDING WOULD TRIGGER OFF A VIOLENT ARGUMENT BETWEEN THEM. THEY WERE EQUIVALENT IN RANK, AND NEITHER WOULD GIVE GROUND...

WE'RE SIMPLY NOT WORKING BY THE BOOK, PLUMMET - I'M IN CHARGE OF THE GLIDER AND I GIVE THE ORDERS!

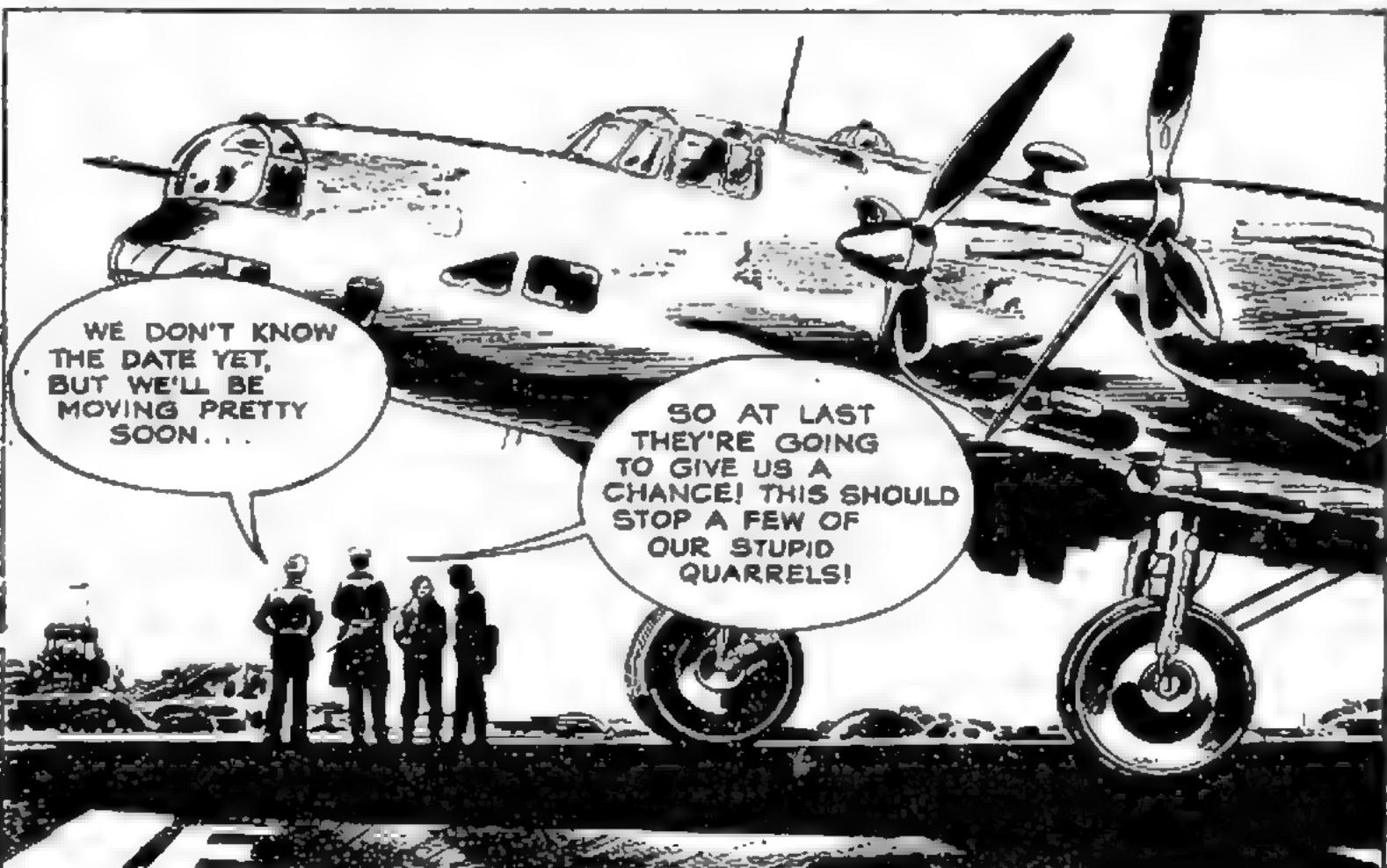
YOU'VE GOT TO REALISE, WARNFORD, THAT IN THE AIR WE WORK AS A TEAM - NOT AS INDIVIDUALS!

YOU FLYING CHAPS HAVE NO DISCIPLINE, THAT'S THE TROUBLE! YOU SLEEP IN SOFT BEDS EVERY NIGHT, WHILE WE SOLDIERS LIVE IN DITCHES.

THAT'S WHERE YOU BELONG, YOU BUNCH' OF CLUELESS CRUISERS!

Honour The Brave

THEIR HEATED QUARREL GREW MORE BITTER AS THE LONG MONTHS OF TRAINING WENT ON. BUT FINALLY, THE LONG-AWAITED DAY ARRIVED - THEY WERE TO SEE ACTION!



Chapter 3. The Gallous Hero

ON THE MORNING OF THE 6TH JUNE, 1944, A GREAT AIR ARMADA DRONED STEADILY OUT OVER THE CHANNEL... THE FIRST AIR LANDING TROOPS HAD GONE IN BEFORE DAYBREAK. THIS WAS THE SECOND REINFORCEMENT WAVE. IT INCLUDED BARRY AND PETER.



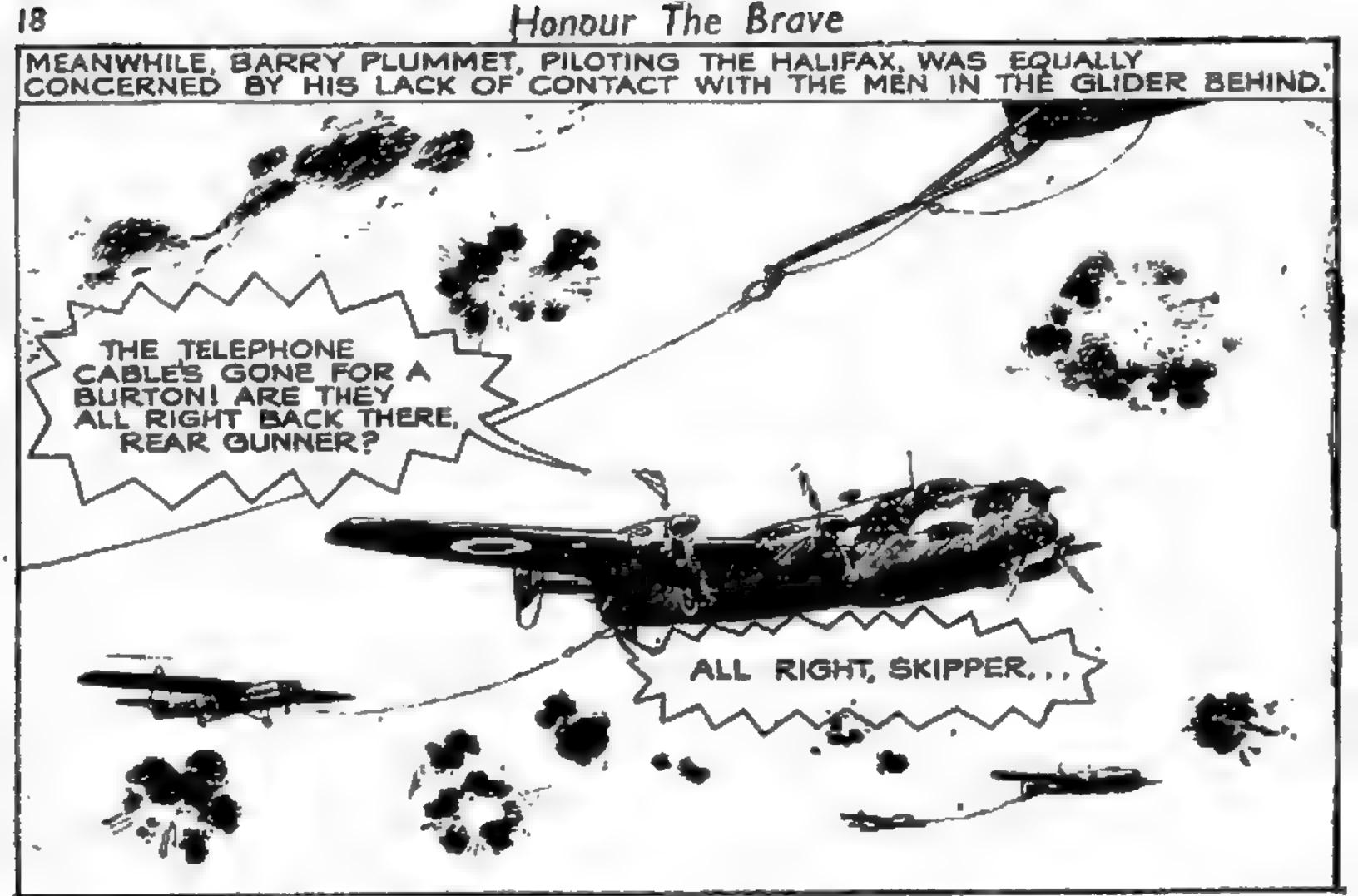
SO FAR,
SO GOOD.

SUDDENLY, AS THEY CROSSED THE ENEMY COAST, THEY RAN INTO A THICK FLAK BARRAGE. PETER COULD GET NO RESPONSE FROM HIS TUG PILOT ON THE INTERCOM...

CONFOUND IT - NOW THE INTERCOM WITH THE TUG'S PACKED UP. IF ANYTHING GOES WRONG WITH THOSE CHAPS IN FRONT, THEY CAN'T TELL US!



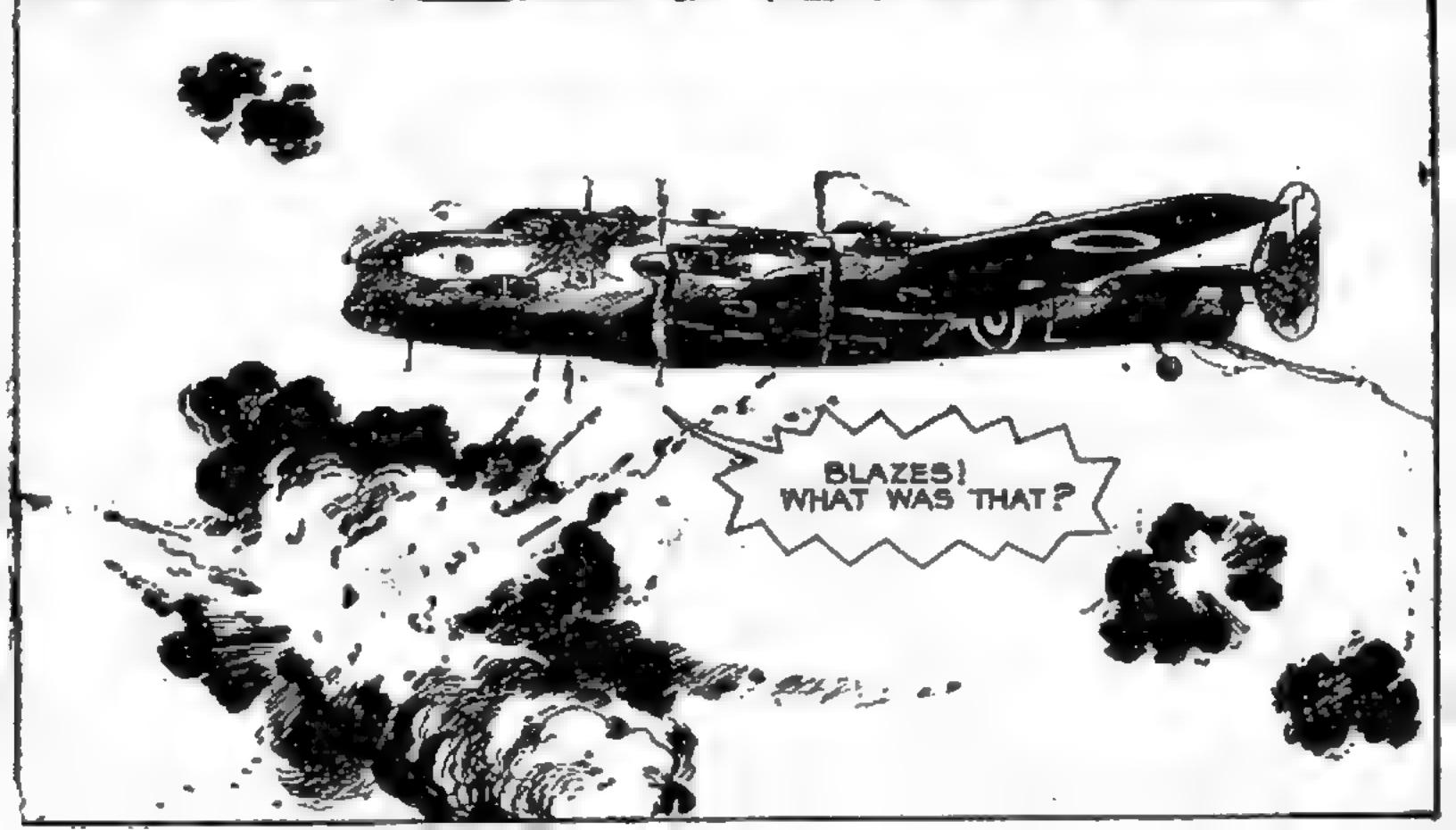
MEANWHILE, BARRY PLUMMET, PILOTING THE HALIFAX, WAS EQUALLY CONCERNED BY HIS LACK OF CONTACT WITH THE MEN IN THE GLIDER BEHIND.



THE TELEPHONE
CABLE'S GONE FOR A
BURTON! ARE THEY
ALL RIGHT BACK THERE,
REAR GUNNER?

ALL RIGHT, SKIPPER...

SUDDENLY THE CREW FELT THE WHOLE HALIFAX SHUDDER, AS AN EIGHTY-EIGHT MILLIMETRE SHELL BURST UNDER THE FORWARD PART OF THE FUSELAGE.



BLAZES!
WHAT WAS THAT?

THERE WAS NO FIRE FROM THE EXPLOSION, BUT THE HEAVY BOMBER SUDDENLY LURCHED OFF TO STARBOARD AND THE PILOT FOUND THE CONTROL COLUMN LOOSE AND USELESS IN HIS HANDS.

WHAT'S HAPPENED?
WE'RE VEERING OFF
COURSE, SKIPPER.

THE BOTTOM OF
THE CONTROL COLUMN'S
SNAPPED. I CAN'T
DO A THING!

IMMEDIATELY, BARRY THOUGHT OF THE GLIDER BEHIND. IT WAS STILL IN TOW, AND THERE WAS NO MEANS OF CONTACTING ITS PILOT OVER THE FAULTY TELEPHONE CABLE.

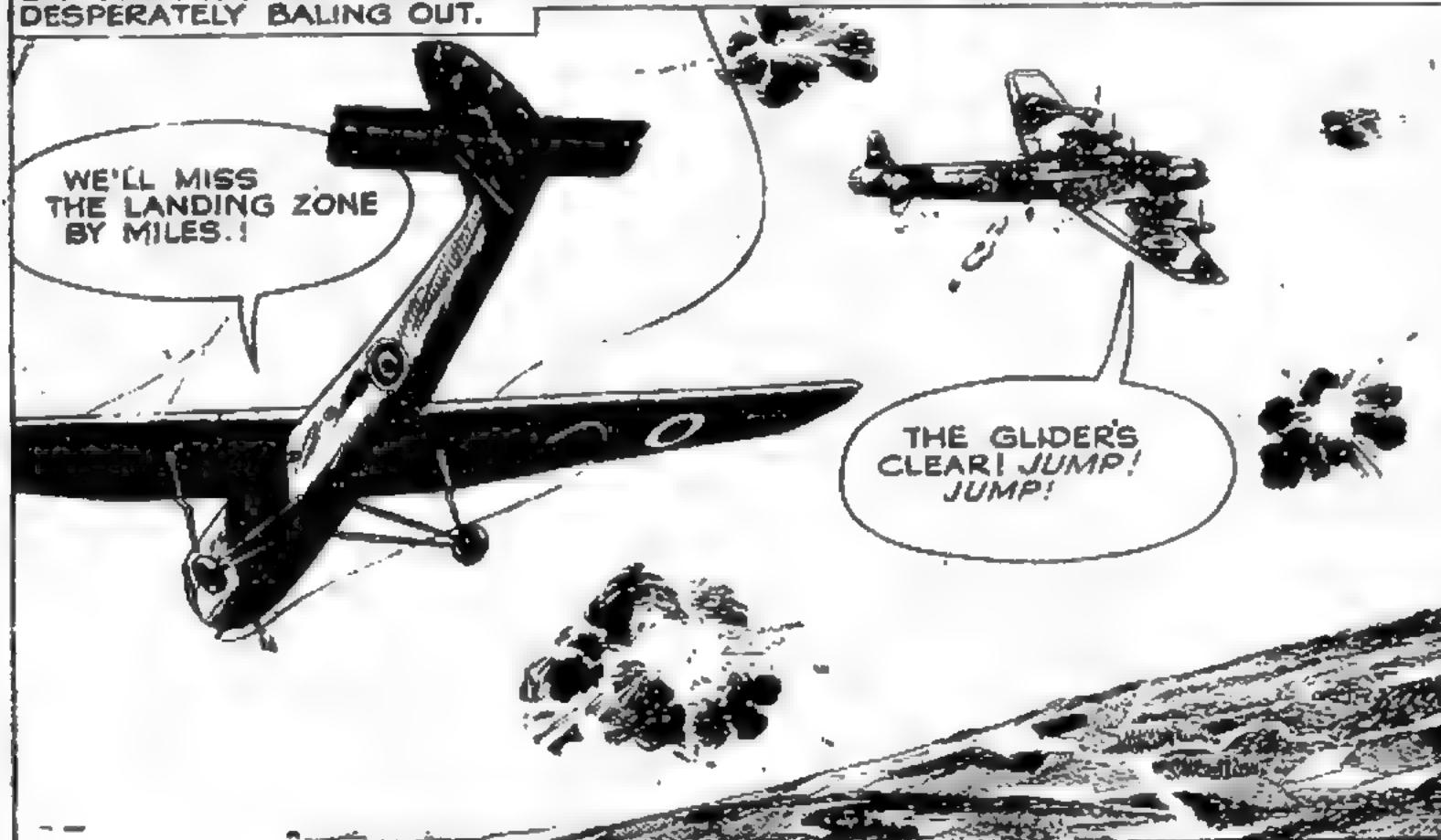
THE GLIDER
TYPES HAVEN'T
CAST OFF YET,
SKIPPER...

FOR PETE'S
SAKE, PULL THE
GLIDER RELEASE. OR
WE'LL PULL 'EM
INTO THE GROUND.
EVERYBODY JUMP
FOR IT ONCE
THE GLIDER'S
CLEAR.

FROM THE GLIDER ITSELF, IT WAS NOT APPARENT THAT THE TUG PLANE WAS MORTALLY DAMAGED. THE GLIDER TROOPS SAW THE HALIFAX TURN SHARPLY TO STARBOARD, THEN JETTISON THE TOW ROPE...



PETER AND HIS MEN WERE NOW ADRIFT BEFORE THEIR TIME! AS THE HORRIFIED CO-PILOT COUNTED DOWN THE FAST-FALLING ALTITUDE, NONE OF THEM SAW THE STRICKEN HALIFAX TURNING AWAY OUT OF CONTROL, AND ALL ITS CREW DESPERATELY BALING OUT.



AS THE GLIDER WENT RUSHING DOWN TOWARDS THE EARTH, PETER PUT ON FULL FLAP TO REDUCE SPEED AND HELD BACK ON HIS STICK...



THE NEXT MOMENT, THEY SWEPT IN BETWEEN SOME TREES AT SIXTY MILES PER HOUR.

IT WAS A GOOD LANDING. IN SECONDS, THE OCCUPANTS OF THE GLIDER WERE BREAKING OPEN THE TAIL UNIT - AND PULLING OUT THE JEEP THEY HAD ON BOARD.

GET CRACKING! WE'VE GOT A JEEP AND A PIAT! WE'RE STILL A FIGHTING UNIT - EVEN IF THOSE AIR FORCE BLIGHTERS HAVE DITCHED US.



Honour The Brave

FORTUNATELY THEY WERE CLOSE TO A ROAD, JUST AS THEY HAD GOT THE JEEP READY, THEY SAW A CONVOY OF VEHICLES APPROACHING.

LOOK, SIR!
JERRY TRUCKS!

THEY'RE
HEADING FOR THE
LANDING ZONE WE
SHOULD HAVE
DROPPED IN! GRAB
THE PIAT AND GET
UNDER COVER!

WELL TRAINED, THE TROOPS REACTED INSTANTLY...

WE CAME HERE TO FIGHT -
AND THIS IS AS GOOD A CHANCE
AS ANY. HOLD YOUR FIRE
UNTIL I TELL YOU!

PETER WAITED UNTIL THE LEADING GERMAN VEHICLE HAD APPROACHED TO WITHIN POINT-BLANK RANGE, THEN HIS VOICE BELLOWED OUT...



THE GERMANS WERE TAKEN COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE. IN A FEW MINUTES, THE PIAT HAD TWO VEHICLES IN FLAMES. NOW THE ROAD WAS BLOCKED BY THEIR BURNING HULKS AND THE CONVOY WAS IN A STATE OF CHAOS AND CONFUSION.



BUT SOON THE GERMANS BEGAN TO RECOVER THEMSELVES, AS THEY REALISED THAT THE OPPOSITION WAS ONLY A SMALL FORCE OF BRITISH SOLDIERS...



PETER DECIDED THAT IT WOULD BE SUICIDAL TO STAY LONGER.



THE ENGINE OF THE JEEP ROARED INTO LIFE. PETER THREW A COUPLE OF GRENADES TO KEEP THE ENEMY BUSY WHILE HE AND THE LAST MAN MADE A DASH FOR IT.



SOON THEY WERE RACING UP THE ROAD AWAY FROM THE GERMANS. ONE OF THEIR NUMBER HAD ALREADY BEEN SHOT, AND NOW THE GLIDER CO-PILOT SLUMPED BACK, BADLY WOUNDED.

WE'VE ALREADY LOST HOSKINS, SIR!... NOW SERGEANT PETTIGREW'S BEEN HIT!

WE'VE GOT TO KEEP GOING OR WE'LL ALL BE DEAD SOON!

THEIR BRIEF ACTION HAD LASTED ONLY A FEW MINUTES. SUDDENLY, AS THEY HURTLED ALONG THE ROAD, THEY SAW SOME PARACHUTES SPREAD OUT ON THE GRASS OF A MEADOW. APPROACHING THEM WERE FIGURES IN FIELD GREY GERMAN UNIFORMS!

LOOK, SIR! SOME OF OUR CHAPS HAVE COME DOWN BY PARACHUTE.

AND THOSE JERRIES HAVE SPOTTED 'EM AS WELL!

Honour The Brave

QUICKLY, PETER DROVE THE JEEP OFF THE ROAD TO HIDE IT IN THE SHADOW OF SOME TREES. FROM THERE, HE WATCHED THE PARACHUTISTS THROUGH HIS BINOCULARS.

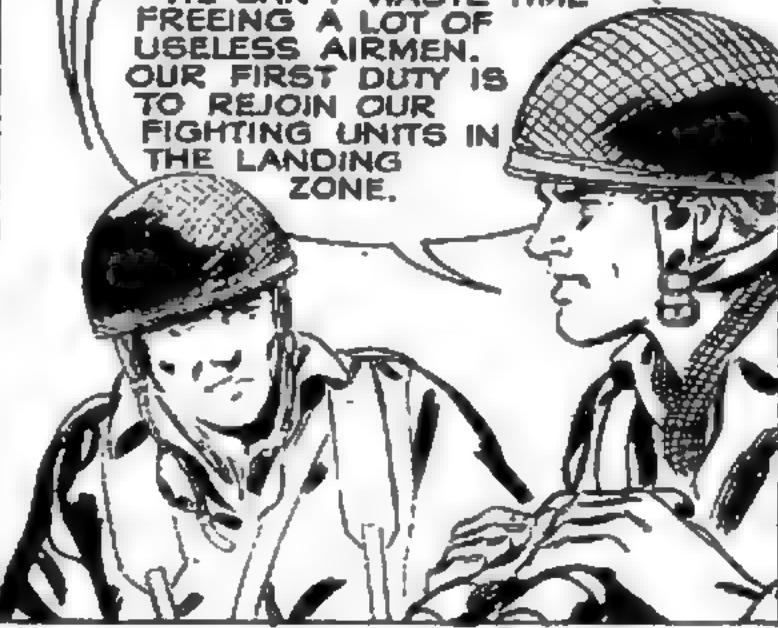


GREAT SCOTT!
IT'S PLUMMET AND
OUR TUG CREW...
THE JERRIES ARE
LOCKING THEM UP - TO
AWAIT INTERROGATION,
I SUPPOSE.

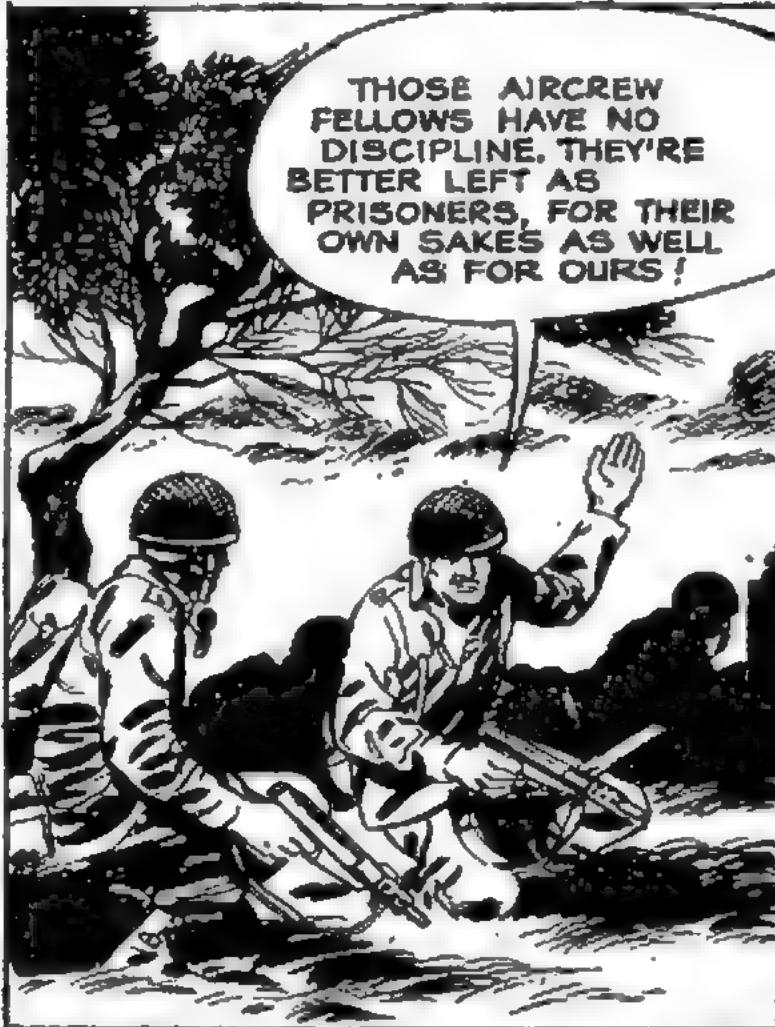
ONE OF THE TROOPS SPOKE UP EXCITEDLY AS HE SAW THE GERMANS WALK OFF...

THE JERRIES HAVEN'T EVEN LEFT A GUARD ON THE DOOR... WE CAN LET THE AIR FORCE BLOKES OUT, SIR!

WE CAN'T WASTE TIME FREEING A LOT OF USELESS AIRMEN. OUR FIRST DUTY IS TO REJOIN OUR FIGHTING UNITS IN THE LANDING ZONE.



THOSE AIRCREW FELLOWS HAVE NO DISCIPLINE. THEY'RE BETTER LEFT AS PRISONERS, FOR THEIR OWN SAKES AS WELL AS FOR OURS!



PETER STARTED UP THE JEEP... IN A MOMENT THEY WERE ON THE MOVE AGAIN.

ANYONE ELSE WOULD HAVE LET THOSE AIRCREW BLOKES FREE... BUT THE MAJOR'S GOT A CHIP ON HIS SHOULDER ABOUT THE AIR FORCE...



Honour The Brave

BARRY PLUMMET AND HIS CAPTURED CREW HAD SEEN THE MEN IN THE JEEP FROM THE WINDOW OF THEIR TEMPORARY PRISON. FOR A MOMENT, THEY THOUGHT THE SOLDIERS WERE COMING TO THEIR RESCUE.



BUT WHEN PETER AND HIS MEN SUDDENLY DROVE OFF AT HIGH SPEED, THE HOPES OF THE CAPTURED AIRCREW WERE DASHED...



AS THEY HEARD THE ROARING CRESCENDO OF THE JEEP'S ENGINE, THE GERMANS RUSHED OUT AND OPENED FIRE. BUT THEY WERE TOO LATE TO STOP PETER'S DETERMINED DEPARTURE.

ACHTUNG,
ENGLANDERS!
STOP THEM!



THE MAIN PART OF THE GLIDER FORCE HAD MET WITH ILL-LUCK. THEY HAD LANDED RIGHT ALONGSIDE A GERMAN FIELD BATTERY AND HAD ALREADY SUFFERED HEAVY CASUALTIES FROM LANDING - CRASHES AND THE GERMAN OPPosition.

THE JERRIES
ARE BRINGING UP
REINFORCEMENTS...
WE'LL NEVER BREAK
OUT OF THE
PERIMETER.



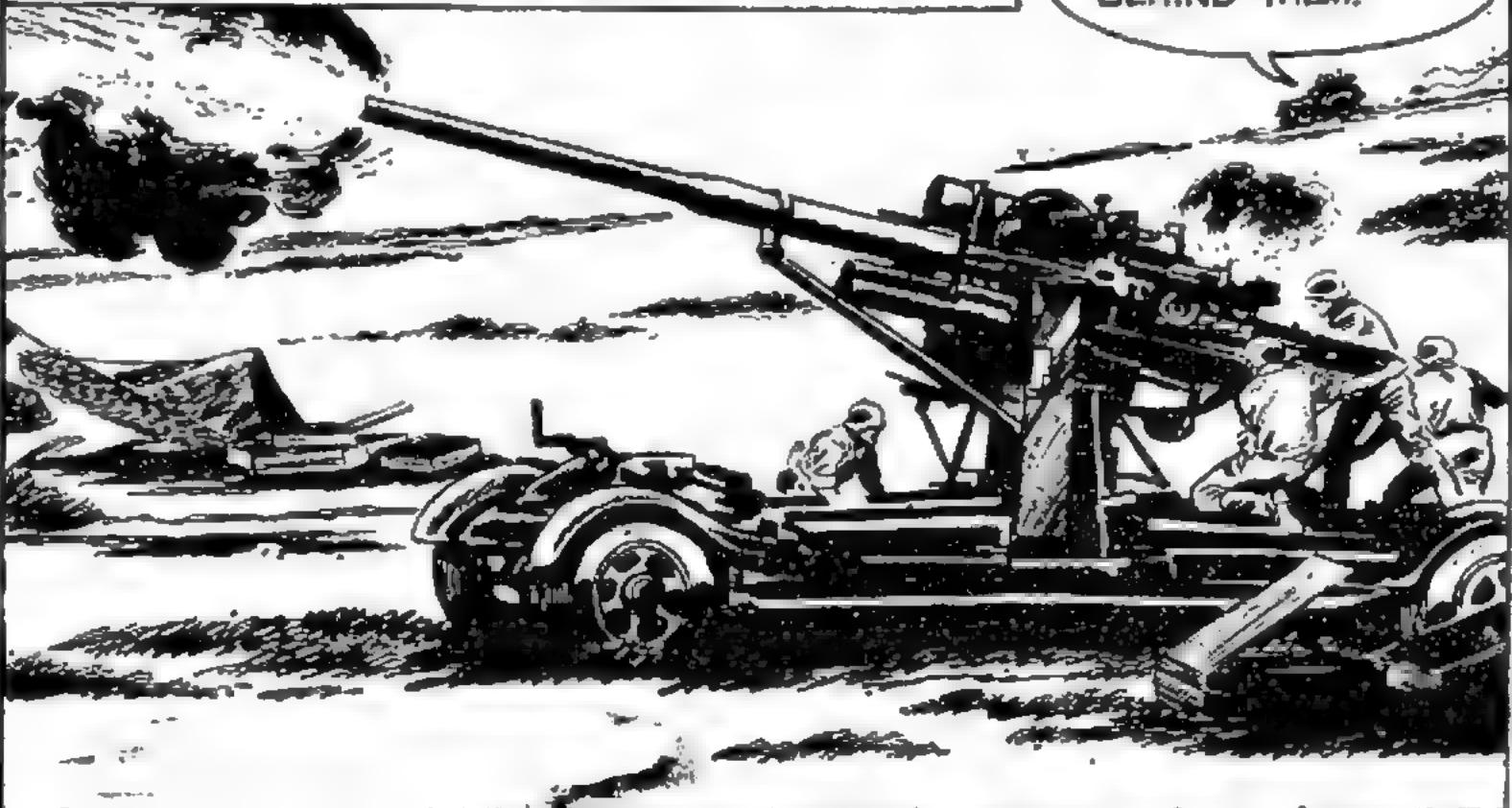
Honour The Brave

THE GERMANS HAD ALREADY BROUGHT INTO ACTION A NUMBER OF THEIR DEADLY MOBILE EIGHTY-EIGHTS, WITH WHICH THEY WERE WRECKING MAYOC AMONG THE HARD PRESSED BRITISH TROOPS. . .



PETER'S JEEP CAME HURTLING ALONG A ROAD HEADING TOWARDS THE MAIN LANDING ZONE, SUDDENLY ITS STARTLED PASSENGERS FOUND THEMSELVES CLOSE BEHIND A GERMAN ARTILLERY POSITION . . .

JUPITER! JERRY EIGHTY-EIGHTS - AND WE'RE RIGHT BEHIND THEM!



THE MAJOR MADE A SPLIT-SECOND DECISION. ALMOST IMMEDIATELY HIS MEN HAD LEAPED FROM THE JEEP AND WERE CREEPING UP BEHIND THE NEAREST GUN.



THE SUDDEN ATTACK FROM THE REAR TOOK THE GERMAN CREW COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE.

AAAGH....!

AAAAA....!

COVER US WITH THE PIAT... WHEN WE'RE NEAR ENOUGH, WE'RE GOING IN WITH THE BAYONET.

SECONDS LATER, PETER WARNFORD'S UNIT HAD CONTROL OF THE GUN...

QUICK! HELP ME TRAVERSE THE GUN!



Honour The Brave

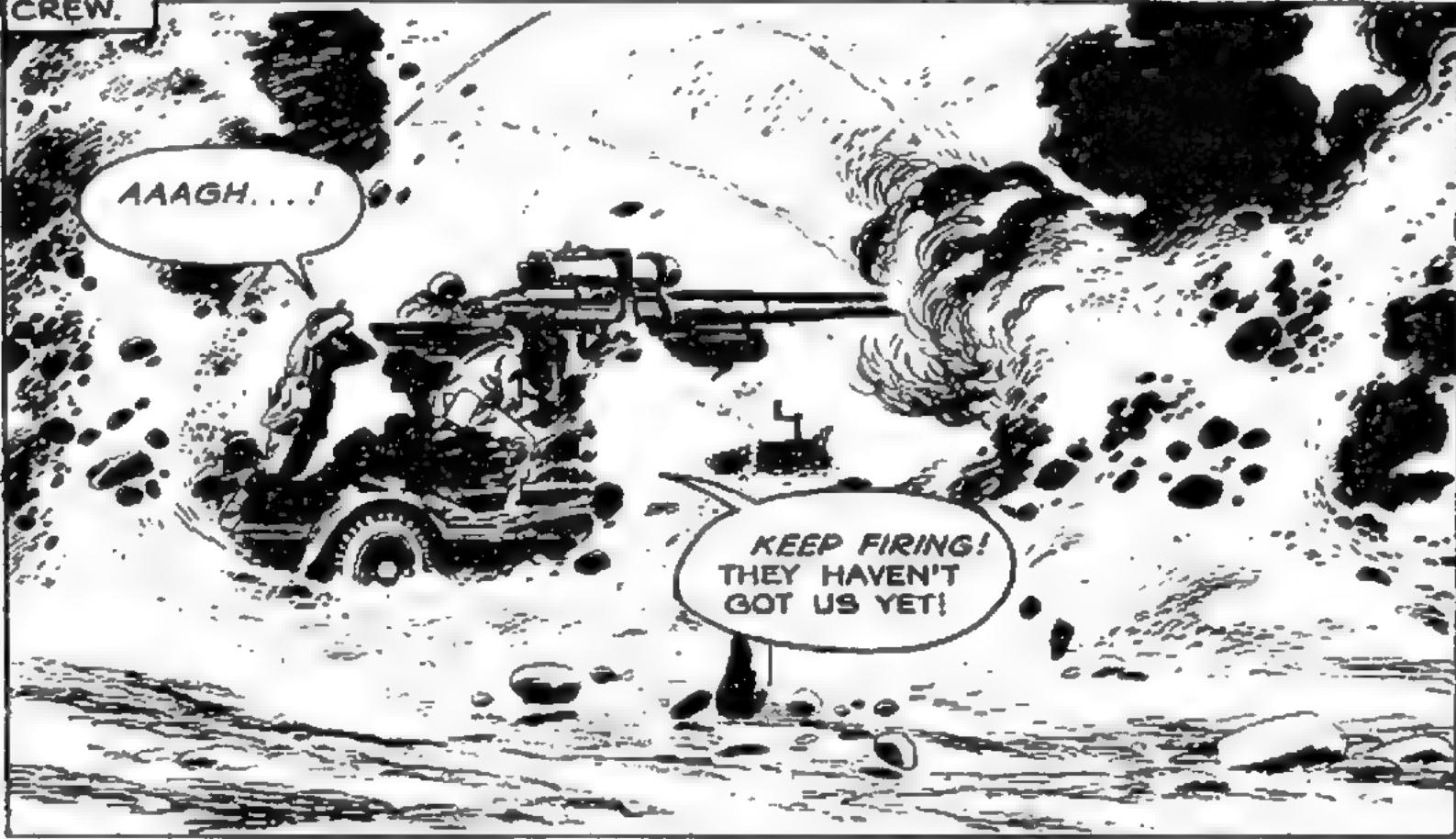
WITH DESPERATE SPEED PETER AND HIS MEN SWUNG THE GUN ROUND TO FACE THE REST OF THE GERMAN BATTERY, RELOADING AS THEY WORKED...



AIMED OVER OPEN SIGHTS, THE CAPTURED GUN BEGAN TO SOW ITS DESTRUCTION AMONG THE OTHER GUNS OF THE BATTERY...



BUT THEIR GALLANT STAND COULD NOT LAST FOR LONG. ALL THE GERMAN ARTILLERY IN THE VICINITY CONCENTRATED THEIR FIRE ON PETER'S PIRATE CREW.



IT WAS PETER WARNFORD'S BOLD ACTION THAT PROVED THE TURNING POINT FOR THE AIRBORNE FORCES. WITH SOME OF THE GERMAN GUNS OUT OF ACTION, THEY BROKE DESPERATELY OUT FROM THEIR CONFINED PERIMETER.



Honour The Brave

AT LAST, THE BRITISH HAD OVER-RUN ALL THE GERMAN POSITIONS... BUT PETER HIMSELF HAD BEEN WOUNDED AGAIN. THEY FOUND HIM BEHIND THE GUN HE HAD CAPTURED - THE ONLY SURVIVOR NOW FROM HIS SMALL UNIT...



THAT EVENING, THE GROUND FORCES ADVANCED TO RELIEVE THEM. PETER WARNFORD WAS THE HERO OF THE HOUR.



Chapter 4. Escape!

THE GLIDER PILOTS RETURNED TO ENGLAND TO RE-FORM FOR FURTHER AIRBORNE OPERATIONS. PETER WARNFORD WAS GIVEN THE D.S.O. AND WAS PROMOTED TO LIEUTENANT COLONEL.



BUT THERE WAS NO ONE TO TELL OF HIS OBSTINATE REFUSAL TO RESCUE FROM CAPTIVITY THE CREW OF HIS OWN TUG.

UNKNOWN TO PETER WARNFORD, ONE SUCH MAN WAS EVENTUALLY TO RETURN. SQUADRON LEADER BARRY PLUMMET, BEING TAKEN TO A PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, JUMPED FROM THE BACK OF A LORRY.



I'LL TAKE
MY CHANCE
WHILE THE
GUARD'S
DOZING.

Honour The Brave

HELPED BY BRAVE MEMBERS OF THE FRENCH RESISTANCE, BARRY WAS PASSED ACROSS THE COUNTRY IN SECRET, HIS JOURNEY A TREMENDOUS RISK TO ALL WHO CAME IN TOUCH WITH HIM.



EVENTUALLY, AFTER MANY MONTHS, HE WAS SHIPPED AWAY ON A SMALL SAILING VESSEL, BY WAY OF THE MEDITERRANEAN AND GIBRALTAR.



BY THE TIME BARRY ARRIVED BACK IN ENGLAND, THE WAR IN EUROPE HAD MOVED ON. THE ALLIED ARMIES WERE ADVANCING INTO BELGIUM AND HOLLAND.



THE GLORIOUS BUT TRAGIC BATTLE OF ARNHEM HAD BEEN FOUGHT.



IN THE SMALL DUTCH TOWN SO MANY OF THE HIGHLY- TRAINED ARMY GLIDER PILOTS HAD BEEN LOST, AS CASUALTIES OR PRISONERS OF WAR.

ALL THESE THINGS HAD HAPPENED BY THE TIME BARRY REPORTED BACK TO ASK FOR A NEW POSTING...





AT THE SAME
TIME, YOU'LL BE
TAUGHT TO HANDLE
A STEN-AS A PILOT
YOU WON'T NEED TO
KNOW MUCH ELSE...
WHAT ABOUT IT?

IF THAT'S THE
ONLY WAY I CAN GET
BACK TO OPS.,
OKAY, SIR, I'LL TRY
ANYTHING ONCE!

SO BARRY PLUMMET TOOK A HURRIED CONVERSION COURSE TO GLIDERS -
AND WAS GIVEN SOME BASIC TRAINING IN THE HANDLING OF SMALL ARMS.



WHO'D HAVE
THOUGHT I'D BECOME
A 'KHAKI TYPE'... STILL;
MIGHT AS WELL
LEARN THE JOB
PROPERLY.

EVENTUALLY, BARRY RECEIVED HIS POSTING TO ONE OF THE WINGS OF THE GLIDER PILOT REGIMENT.



TO HIS SHOCKED SURPRISE, BARRY FOUND THAT HIS NEW C.O. WAS NONE OTHER THAN LIEUTENANT-COLONEL PETER WARNFORD, D.S.O.! THE TWO MEN STARED AT EACH OTHER FOR A MOMENT...



PETER'S WELCOME TO THE
RETURNED PRISONER-OF-WAR
WAS HARDLY CORDIAL...



I CAN'T SAY I'M
GLAD TO SEE YOU,
PLUMMET. THE LAST THING
I WANT IS AIR FORCE
TYPES PLAYING AT
SOLDIERS. UNDERSTAND
YOU'RE UNDER MILITARY
DISCIPLINE NOW!

BUT THERE WAS LITTLE TIME FOR THEIR PERSONAL QUARREL TO DEVELOP
BEFORE THEY WENT INTO ACTION.



IT'S THE
CROSSING OF THE
RHINE! YOU'LL BE
LANDED IN FAIRLY
SMALL TACTICAL
GROUPS...

THE TASKS ALLOCATED TO PETER WARNFORD'S WING WERE EXPLAINED ON A HUGE WALL MAP.



YOU ARE TO DESTROY THIS GERMAN GUN BATTERY ON TOP OF THE RIDGE. IT COULD PROVE A MENACE TO A LARGE SECTION OF THE RHINE CROSSING.



THERE IS ALSO A FLAK BATTERY TO THE NORTHWEST OF IT. ONE SQUADRON WILL LAND APART FROM THE OTHERS TO PUT THIS OUT OF ACTION.



THE FLAK BATTERY IS THE LEAST IMPORTANT PART OF THE JOB - I'LL LEAVE THAT TO PLUMMET.

Chapter 5. Together They Stand

THE AIR ARMADA SET OUT ON ITS JOURNEY. BUT AS THEY NEARED THE LANDING-ZONE, THE FLAK WAS PROVING A MENACE TO THE SLOW-FLYING AIRCRAFT...

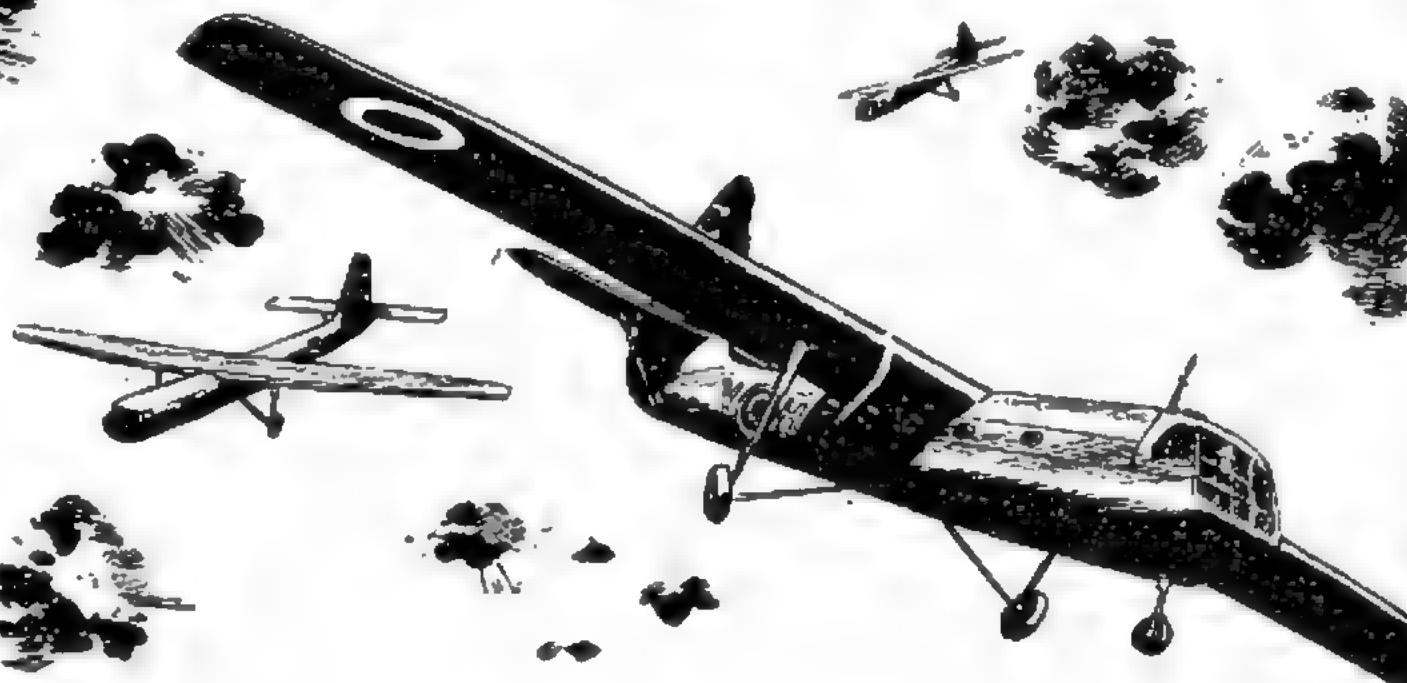


THE GERMAN GUNNERS WERE BRINGING DOWN THE CUMBERSOME GLIDERS ONE AFTER ANOTHER...



Honour The Brave

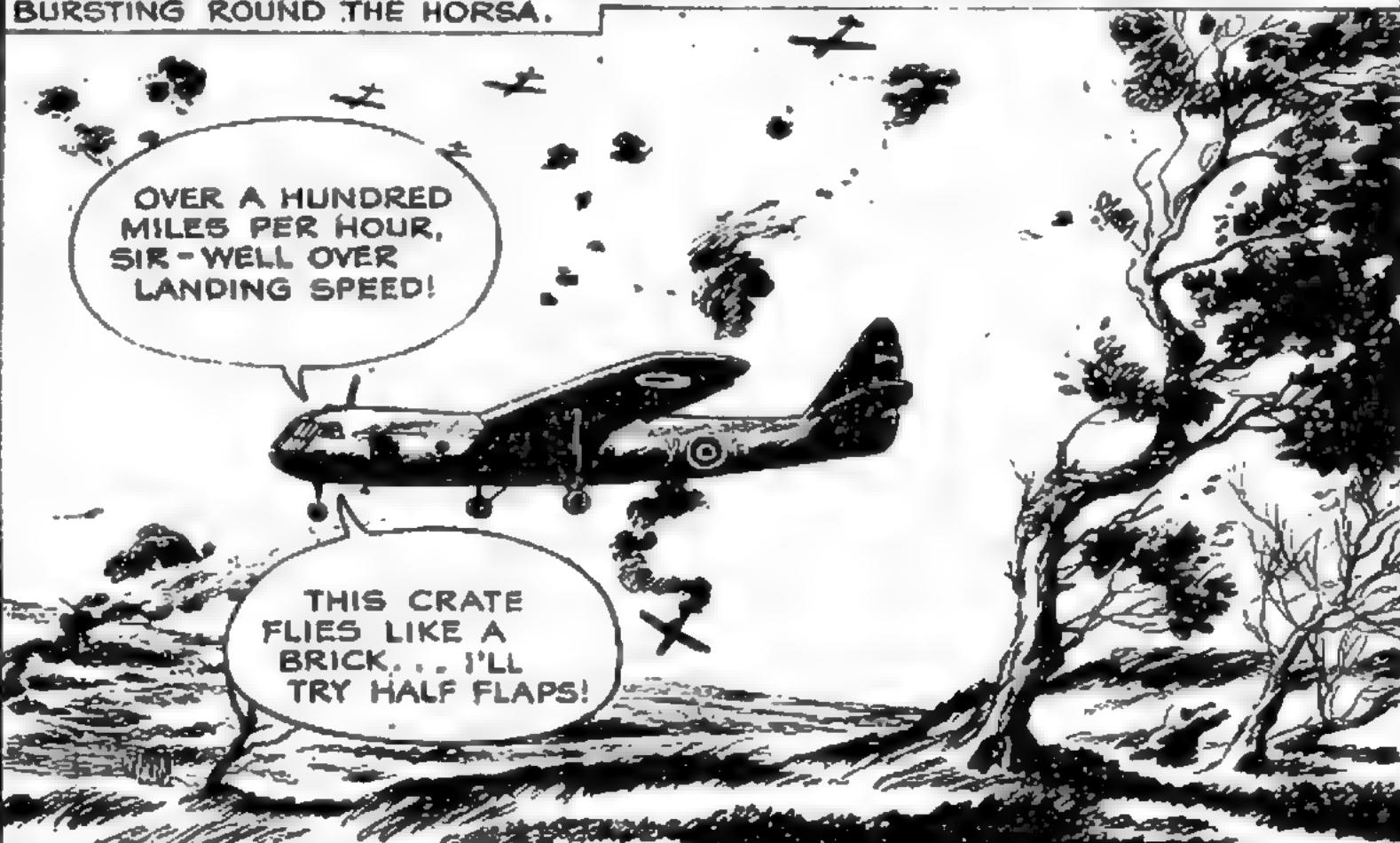
BARRY PLUMMET WAS ONLY TOO FAMILIAR WITH THE TERRIFYING FLAK BURSTS... HE PUT HIS GLIDER INTO A STEEP DIVE, AND THE OTHER PILOTS OF HIS SQUADRON FOLLOWED.



WHEN BARRY LEVELLED OUT NEAR THE GROUND, HIS GLIDER HAD GAINED AN ALARMING SPEED. BUT THE VICIOUS BALLS OF FLAK WERE STILL BURSTING ROUND THE HORSA.

OVER A HUNDRED MILES PER HOUR, SIR - WELL OVER LANDING SPEED!

THIS CRATE FLIES LIKE A BRICK... I'LL TRY HALF FLAPS!



BARRY KNEW DESPERATE MEASURES WERE NEEDED. THE GLIDER ITSELF WAS UNARMED. SO HE DECIDED TO TRY SOMETHING WHICH HAD NOT BEEN IN THE TEXTBOOK OF GLIDER FLYING.



NEXT MOMENT, BARRY'S GLIDER WAS SWEEPING OVER THE HEADS OF THE CREW OF ONE OF THE GUNS, HIS CO-PILOT'S STEN SPRAYING DEATH AMONG THE FLABBERGASTED GERMANS.



Honour The Brave

WE'VE PRANGED THEM! THEY DIDN'T EXPECT THAT!

THE OTHER PILOTS OF BARRY'S SQUADRON SAW WHAT HE WAS DOING AND DIVED OVER THE GUNS AFTER HIM... THE GERMAN GUNNERS WERE RAKED WITH STEN FIRE.



BARRY'S DETACHMENT CRASH-LANDED THEIR GLIDERS JUST BEYOND THE FLAK BATTERY... GRINDING TO A HALT AT SUCH A SPEED, THAT THE BRITISH TROOPS SUFFERED A FURTHER TOLL OF CASUALTIES...

COME ON, CUT YOUR WAY OUT! LET'S GET AT THE JERRIES, BEFORE THEY RECOVER!



STAGGERING FROM THE SPLINTERED WRECKAGE OF HIS GLIDER, BARRY PLUMMET FOUND HIMSELF THE SENIOR OFFICER OF THE SURVIVORS. WITHOUT PAUSING A SECOND, HE LED HIS MEN TOWARDS THE NEAREST GUN POSITION - WITH STENS BLAZING.



IN TWO DESPERATE MINUTES, THE FIRST GUN WAS TAKEN. STRAIGHT AWAY, BARRY BEGAN RE-DIRECTING THE VICIOUS FIRE OF HIS MEN ON TO THE OTHER GERMAN GUN PITS...



THE PIATS CRASHED OUT IN UNISON AND STENS CHATTERED SPITEFULLY. SOON, BESIDE THE SHATTERED GUNS OF THE FLAK BATTERY, THE GERMANS RAISED THEIR ARMS IN SURRENDER...



BUT BEFORE BARRY'S MEN HAD PUT THE FLAK OUT OF ACTION - THE GLIDERS OF THE MAIN FORCE HAD SUFFERED HEAVILY.



PETER WARNFORD MOMENTARILY LOST HIS NERVE. AS A SOLDIER, HE WAS NOT USED TO THE FLAMING HORRORS OF FLAK... THE APPROACHING GROUND BECAME A BLUR TO HIM, AND HIS HANDS WAVERED ON THE CONTROLS...



ABOARD PETER'S GLIDER WAS THE BRIGADIER IN CHARGE OF THE LANDING - FORCE, HE WAS RAGING AS HE STEPPED FROM THE GLIDER. . .



THE BRIGADIER'S DAMAGED RADIO WAS CAUSING CONFUSION THROUGHOUT THE LANDING FORCE, AS OTHER GLIDER PARTIES BEGAN TRYING TO LOCATE THEIR HEADQUARTERS.



BACK AT THE CAPTURED FLAK BATTERY, BARRY PLUMMET HAD ALREADY TAKEN CARE OF HIS PRISONERS. BUT HIS JOB WAS NOT YET OVER...

WHAT DO WE DO NOW, SIR?

THESE MEN EXPECT ME TO LEAD THEM - BUT I'VE HAD NO MILITARY TRAINING.



THERE'S NO SIGN OF THE MAIN FORCE, SIR! THEY SHOULD HAVE BEGUN THE ATTACK ON THE MAIN BATTERY BY NOW.

THAT MAIN BATTERY MUST BE PUT OUT OF ACTION IN TIME FOR THE RHINE CROSSING! WE'LL ATTACK IT, THEN!

WE COULD HAVE A CRACK OURSELVES. WHAT ABOUT IT, SIR?

GET CRACKING, LADS - YOU HEARD WHAT THE C.O. SAID!

I MUST DO THE RIGHT THING...



Honour The Brave

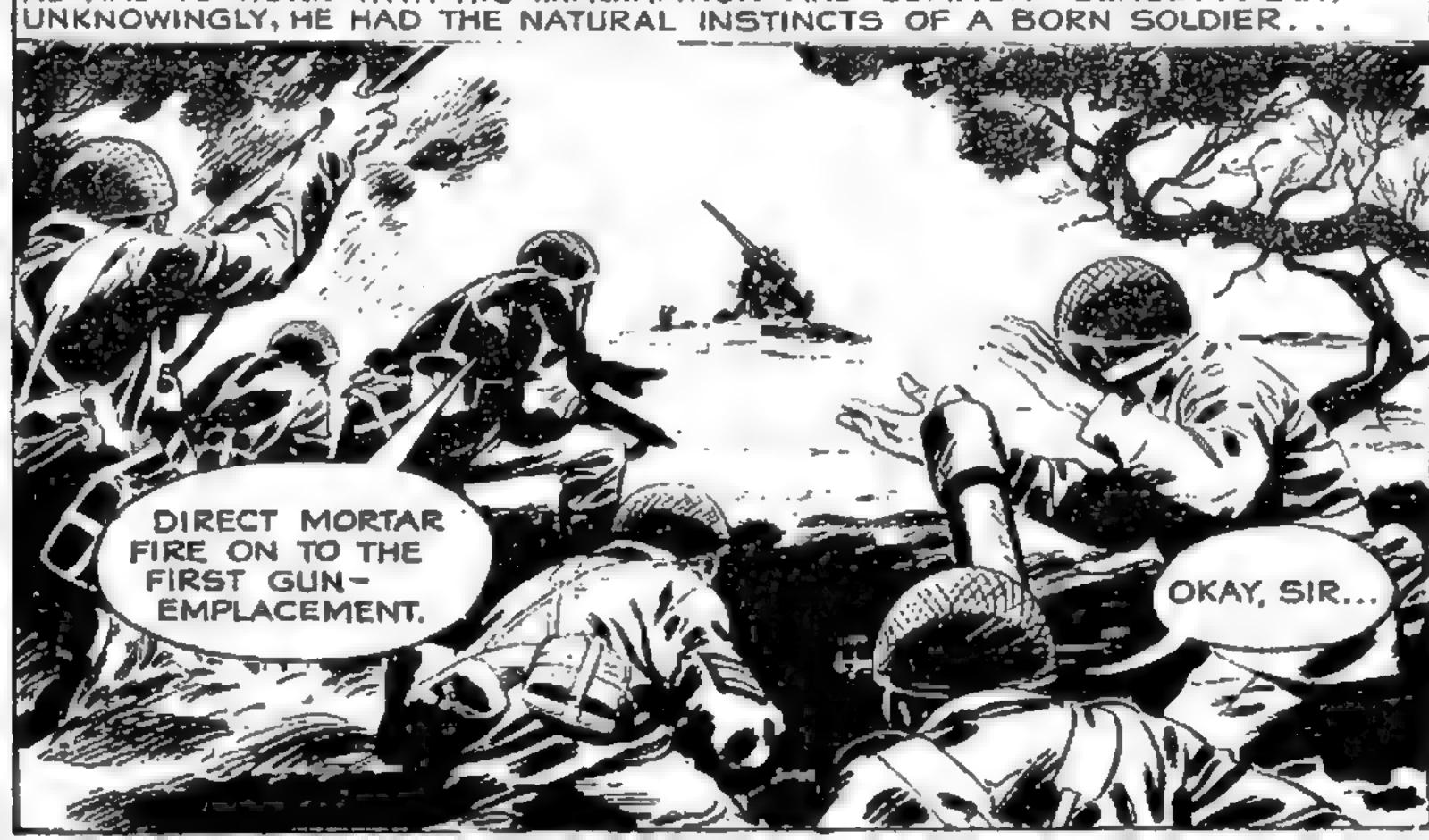
5.

SWIFTLY AND SILENTLY, BARRY LED HIS UNIT UP THE HILL TO OUTFLANK THE GUN BATTERY WHICH WAS TO BE THE MAIN OBJECTIVE OF THE AIRBORNE TROOPS.



I'VE GOT TO
SHOW THESE
KHAKI-TYPES THAT I
CAN PLAY SOLDIERS
AS WELL... WE'LL
WORK UP THE SIDE
OF THE HILL.

HE HAD TO WORK WITH HIS IMAGINATION AND COMMON-SENSE... BUT, UNKNOWINGLY, HE HAD THE NATURAL INSTINCTS OF A BORN SOLDIER...



DIRECT MORTAR
FIRE ON TO THE
FIRST GUN-
EMPLACEMENT.

OKAY, SIR...

THE MORTARS THUNDERED OUT A GRIM CHALLENGE... AND SOME OF THE GERMANS WERE CUT DOWN UNDER A WITHERING HAIL OF SHRAPNEL.

RIGHT - FIX BAYONETS - WE'RE GOING STRAIGHT FOR 'EM!

AAAAA...



WITH A YELL, BARRY LEAPED TO HIS FEET AND WAVED HIS MEN FORWARD.

UP AND AT 'EM, LADS! CHARGE!



THE SURVIVING GUNNERS STILL FOUGHT ON GRIMLY AND LAID DOWN A HEAVY CURTAIN OF FIRE IN FRONT OF THEIR POSITION. BARRY'S MEN FOUND IT HARD GOING, BUT WERE SPURRED ON BY THE INSPIRATION OF THEIR LEADER...



BY THE SHEER BRASH AUDACITY OF THEIR TACTICS, BARRY'S SMALL BAND FORCED THEIR WAY INTO THE FIRST OF THE GUN EMPLACEMENTS... BUT THEY COULD GO NO FARTHER.



FROM THIS FIRST CAPTURED POSITION, THE BRITISH GLIDER TROOPS COULD CONTINUE TO RAKE THE OTHER GERMAN GUNS OF THE BATTERY WITH HARASSING CLOSE-QUARTER FIRE...



Honour The Brave

BARRY KNEW THAT THEIR OWN POSITION WAS DESPERATE.

WE'VE DONE A GOOD JOB, SIR - BUT WE'RE OUTNUMBERED AND LOSING MORE MEN. IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE WE'RE EITHER COUNTER-ATTACKED - OR WIPE OUT PIECEMEAL.

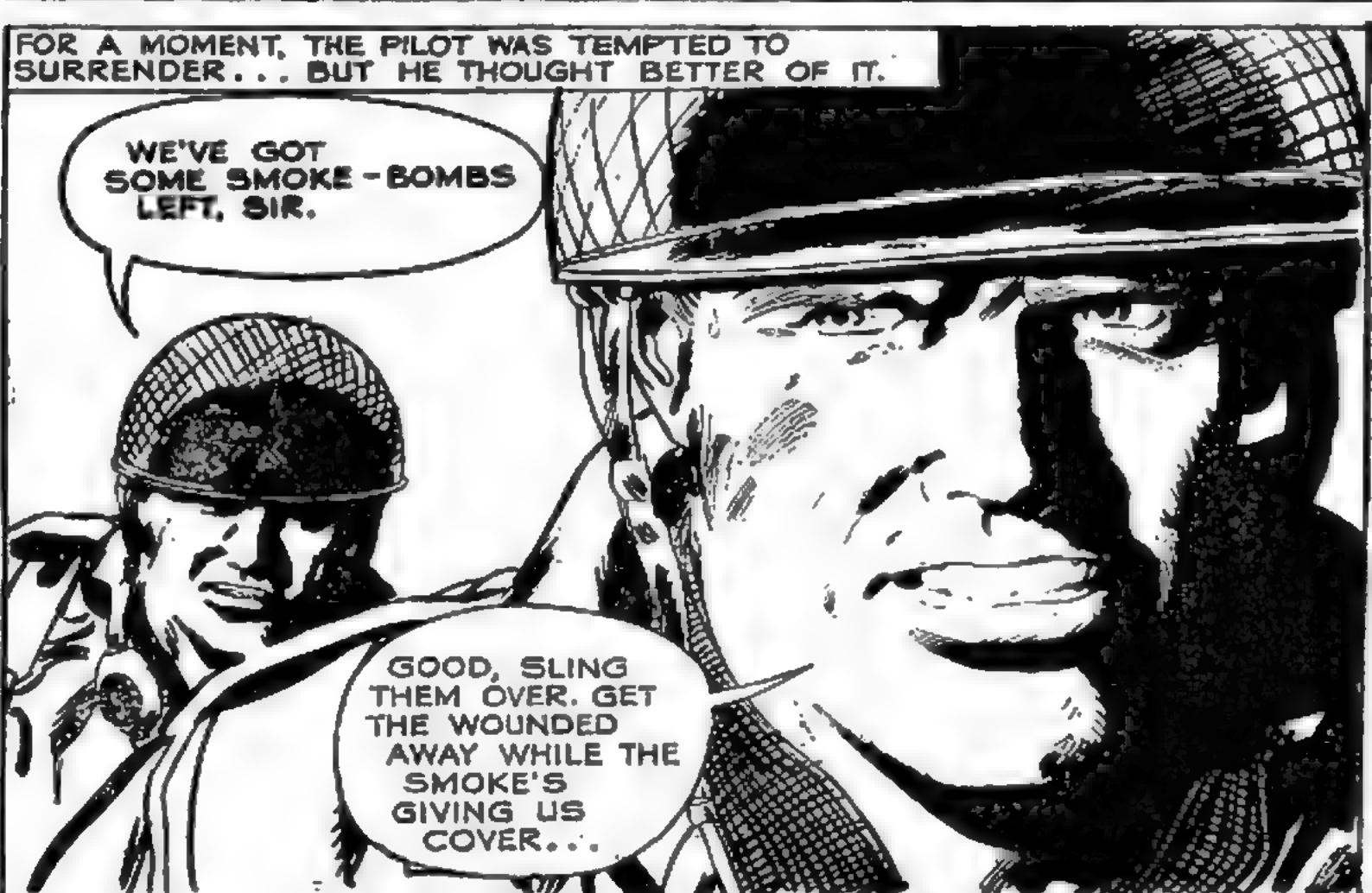
I KNOW, SERGEANT... WE'VE GOT TO THINK WHAT OUGHT TO BE DONE WITH THE WOUNDED.



FOR A MOMENT, THE PILOT WAS TEMPTED TO SURRENDER... BUT HE THOUGHT BETTER OF IT.

WE'VE GOT SOME SMOKE-BOMBS LEFT, SIR.

GOOD, SLING THEM OVER. GET THE WOUNDED AWAY WHILE THE SMOKE'S GIVING US COVER...



WHILE THE THICK SMOKE SHROUDED THE GUN-PIT, THE WOUNDED WERE SHIFTED BACK. BARRY AND A HANDFUL OF MEN STAYED TO KEEP UP COVERING FIRE...



AT LAST, THE WOUNDED HAD REACHED THE COMPARATIVE SAFETY OF A THICK WOOD...



FEW MEN WERE LEFT WITH BARRY IN THE SHAMBLES OF THE GUN-EMPLACEMENT... STREAKS OF FLAME FROM THEIR GUN-MUZZLES CUT THROUGH THE CURLING FINGERS OF THE THICK SMOKE-SCREEN...



FOR A MOMENT, THE SERGEANT HESITATED... THEN HE SAW A PATCH OF BLOOD ON THE OFFICER'S LEG...



BOTH BARRY AND THE SERGEANT KNEW THAT HIS WOUND WAS TOO BAD TO ALLOW HIM TO WALK... AND THE PILOT WAS DETERMINED NOT TO SLOW DOWN HIS MEN AND INCREASE THEIR DANGER...



THIS WAS A MOMENT OF TRUTH FOR BARRY: PLUMMET — A MOMENT OF DESPERATE, BITTER TRUTH.



WRACKED BY THE PAIN OF HIS WOUNDS, BARRY KEPT FIRING HIS STEN AT THE GERMAN POSITIONS, WHILE THE SERGEANT, AND THE REST OF HIS MEN, DISAPPEARED INTO THE SWIRLING SMOKE BEHIND HIM...



AS BARRY SLAMMED ANOTHER MAGAZINE INTO HIS STEN, HE SAW THAT THE SMOKE - SCREEN WAS THINNING FAST...

THE SMOKE'S DRIFTING CLEAR—
BUT I CAN HARDLY STAND NOW,
ANYWAY...



HE BEGAN TO CRAWL FROM PLACE TO PLACE AMONG THE FALLEN, FIRING ONE ROUND FROM EACH POSITION - AND GROWING WEAKER EVERY SECOND.

IF I KEEP MOVING ABOUT, THE JERRIES WILL THINK THERE ARE STILL A FEW OF US LEFT... IT MIGHT KEEP THEM OCCUPIED A LITTLE LONGER.



BY THIS TIME, THE MAIN BRITISH GLIDER-BORNE FORCE HAD GOT TOGETHER AND WERE AT LAST APPROACHING THE HARASSED GERMAN BATTERY.

THE ATTACK STARTS IN FIVE MINUTES, GENTLEMEN!

I CAN HEAR SOME FIRING, SIR... AND, LOOK! THERE ARE SOME MEN COMING THIS WAY!

THE NEWCOMERS WERE THE WOUNDED SURVIVORS OF BARRY'S BRAVE LITTLE FORCE. THEIR SERGEANT TOLD THE BRIGADIER OF THE SQUADRON LEADER'S GALLANTRY AND SELF-SACRIFICE.

... AND YOU SAY SQUADRON LEADER PLUMMET IS STILL THERE?

HE NEVER MEANT TO COME AWAY WITH US, SIR... HE STAYED TO HOLD UP THE JERRIES!



LIEUTENANT-COLONEL PETER WARNFORD, STANDING CLOSE BY, HEARD THE BRIGADIER GIVE HIS ORDERS FOR THE OPENING OF THE FINAL ATTACK ON THE BATTERY.



PETER WARNFORD WAS STRICKEN WITH REMORSE, BITTERLY REGRETTING HIS LONG STUPID QUARREL WITH THE R.A.F. MAN WHO HAD PROVED HIMSELF SO GALLANTLY.





IN FACT, PLUMMET IS A BETTER SOLDIER THAN I. HE'S PREPARED TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF FOR THE SAKE OF HIS MEN. I LET HIM DOWN ONCE BEFORE... IT'S UP TO ME TO TRY TO SAVE HIM NOW - IF HE IS STILL ALIVE.

PETER PUT HIS SUGGESTION TO THE BRIGADIER.



ONE MAN MIGHT GET THROUGH, WHERE MORE WOULDN'T. JUST GIVE ME FIVE MINUTES TO TRY TO RESCUE PLUMMET, SIR!



VERY WELL... WE'LL LAY DOWN NOTHING BUT SMOKE FOR FIVE MINUTES... BUT AFTER THAT OUR BARRAGE MUST BEGIN, WHATEVER HAPPENS... GOOD LUCK!

SO PETER, WARDNFORD SET OUT INTO THE NO MAN'S LAND OF SWIRLING SMOKE AND FLASHING GUN MUZZLES, TOWARDS THE GERMAN BATTERY...



AT LAST PETER REACHED THE POSITION WHERE BARRY'S TROOPS HAD MADE THEIR GALLANT STAND. HE SCRAMBLED DOWN INTO THAT SCENE OF CARNAGE, MUTE EVIDENCE OF THE HEROIC FIGHTING WHICH HAD TAKEN PLACE. THERE HE FOUND BARRY ALREADY WEAK FROM HIS WOUNDS.

PLUMMET! THANK THE STARS YOU'RE STILL ALIVE... I'VE COME TO END OUR QUARREL, OLD MAN...

WARNFORD... GOOD TO SEE YOU... BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE COME FOR ME.

BUT JUST AS PETER HAD FINISHED BANDAGING BARRY'S WOUNDS, THE FIRST OF THE BRITISH SHRAPNEL SHELLS EXPLODED CLOSE BY...



PETER KNEW THAT TO STAY A MOMENT LONGER MEANT CERTAIN DEATH FOR BOTH OF THEM. BUT THERE WAS STILL JUST A CHANCE IF THEY MOVED FAST... SWIFTLY HIS STRONG ARMS LIFTED THE WOUNDED AIRMAN IN A FIREMAN'S LIFT.



WITH THE WEIGHT OF HIS ONE-TIME ENEMY ACROSS HIS SHOULDERS, PETER SET OFF IN A STAGGERING, SWAYING RUN BACK TO THE BRITISH POSITIONS...



NOT MUCH FARTHER NOW...
MUST KEEP GOING...

CALLING UPON HIS LAST RESERVES OF STRENGTH, PETER AT LAST REACHED THE SAFETY OF THE BRITISH POSITION. GENTLY, HE LAY THE WOUNDED AIRMAN ON THE GROUND. GONE WAS THE HATE HE HAD FELT FOR BARRY...



THANKS,
I OWE YOU
MY LIFE!

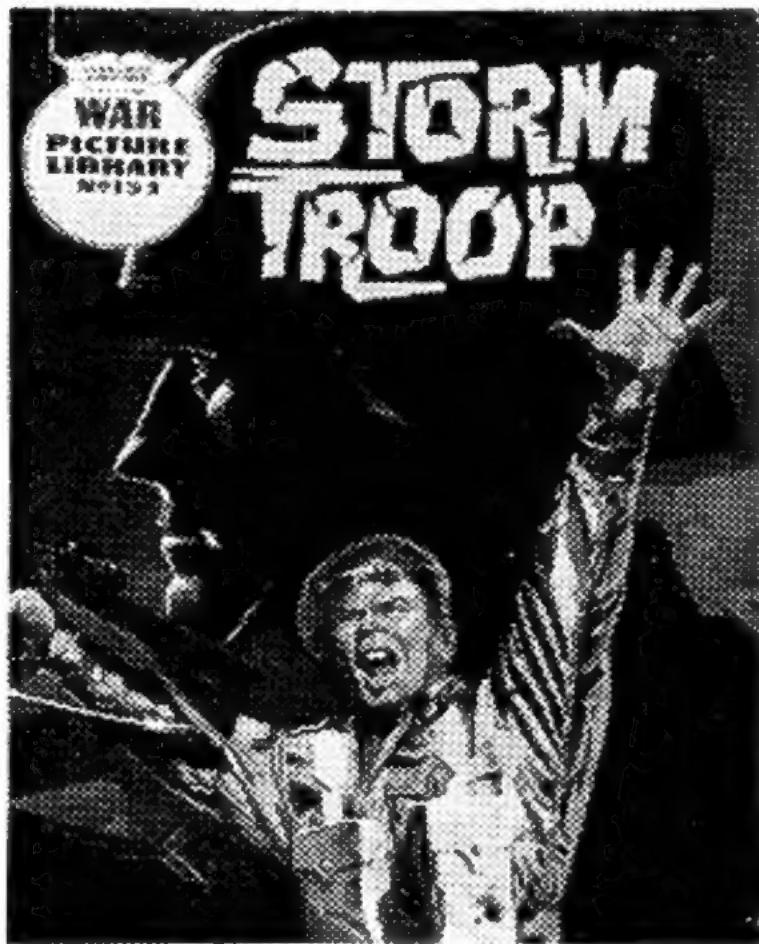
BUT I OWE YOU A
GREAT DEAL MORE, OLD
FELLOW. YOU'VE SHOWN ME THAT
THE SERVICES MUST CO-OPERATE IF
WE ARE TO WIN THIS WAR. FROM NOW
ON, WE FIGHT... TOGETHER!

ALSO ON SALE NOW

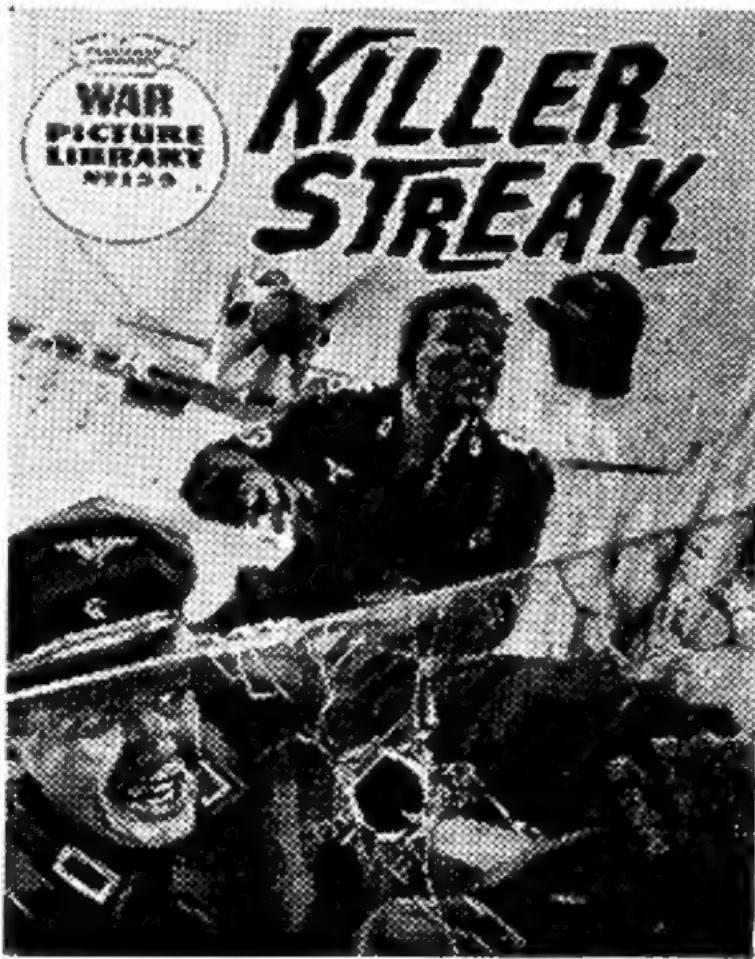
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